

June 3, 2006
K-12 Funding Structures Subgroup
DRAFT Meeting Notes

Attendees

Advisory Committee and Subgroup members: Jeff Vincent (chair), Mike Merlino, Tom Ikeda, Tim Washburn, and Terry Bergeson. Joining by phone at various points were Renee Buell and Ross Hunter.

Staff: Ann Daley, Jennifer Priddy, Denise Graham, Melissa Beard, and Cal Brodie.

Agenda

1. New definition of basic ed
2. Resources needed to achieve above
3. Phasing
4. Role of state vs. local funding
5. Accountability

The finance structures subgroup agreed that any new funding model would need to be phased in over 6 to 8 years. The education structures subgroup will need to prioritize, but the finance subgroup members want to provide the following feedback to that group to take into consideration.

School Size, Class Size and All Day K

The subgroup believes the new funding system should be neutral on school size; so any incentives or disincentives built into the model regarding class size should be taken out.

The finance subgroup agreed there should not be a maximum class size (a.k.a, “trigger”).

The subgroup discussed the need to be practical, to take into account space issues and the difficulty in finding a lot of good, new teachers all at once. To that end, we should prioritize the elements that don’t require additional classrooms, such as instructional coaches, professional development, and tutors. Those elements that require more classroom space should receive lower priority.

There was a consensus from the group that class size in the early grades should take precedence over the later grades.

If the state were to adopt universal all-day kindergarten, then it should provide funding to prepare facilities and buildings for this. A grant program was discussed. .

Additional Instructional Support

The group discussed the need to mandate the use of instructional facilitators. Mandates on other categories were deemed to be not as important.

Summer school

The subgroup agreed that summer school should be a high priority, but they did not like the Picus/Odden funding mechanism (i.e., provide funding based on half of the free-and-reduced-price lunch enrollment).

Tutor

Subgroup members agreed tutors should be a high priority.

Remediation

The subgroup discussed alternative methods of funding remediation. Where Picus/Odden recommend funding based on poverty, the subgroup discussed funding based on test scores or some other measure of student achievement. If the state creates a new, stronger education system including all-day kindergarten, we should expect less remediation to be needed in the later grades. If poverty is the funding driver, funding would not decrease as student achievement increased and the need for remediation decreased. But rather than decrease funding to districts that do well, the state should allow them to spend the money in areas other than remediation.

ELL and Gifted

The consultants' recommendations for funding gifted programs and bilingual programs are predicated on the lower class sizes in core instruction and other staffing enhancements such as tutors and remediation. The subgroup would like the consultants' recommendations for gifted and bilingual funding in the absence of decreased class size.

Special Ed

The subgroup listened to the recommendations from OSPI's Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) and agreed to discuss special education funding at greater length at their next meeting.

Compensation

The subgroup members discussed the need to raise salaries to attract high quality teachers, particularly beginning teacher salaries. But significant increases in base salaries should be tied to moving to a knowledge and skills based pay system, such as the one the consultants proposed. Pilot projects should be used in the beginning, but we should move toward creating a new salary structure for new teachers with the ability of older teachers to opt in. The state could allow an increase in base pay for those districts that agree to have a knowledge and skills-based pay system.

Local vs. State Funding Discussion

The subgroup discussed the following idea: Initially, the state could provide funding for the Picus/Odden model (or parts of it) to high poverty schools only, and local levies could be used to fill in the gaps at other schools. Districts levy lids would be raised to the amount needed to fill in the gaps. As state funding is increased over a 6 to 8 year period, local levy lids would be decreased (but not eliminated). The 60% vote required for local levy passage should be changed.

Accountability Discussion

Students are already held accountable through the graduation requirements.

School-based accountability: The subgroup agreed there should be some form of school-based rewards and accountability.

The subgroup discussed ways of holding districts accountable for student achievement. Two forms of district accountability were discussed: The first was that districts should be required to purchase the types of staffing the funding model provides (class size, instructional coaches, tutors, etc.); a.k.a., “use it or lose it.” The second was to give districts flexibility in how they spend their money unless they aren’t performing, then their authority over spending decisions should be decreased.